Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-29 (Canceled).

30. (Currently Amended) A database management apparatus comprising:

a database storage unit which stores a database comprising a plurality of records, each record including a plurality of data segments identified by ~~respective~~ item category titles that identify respective categories of the data segments;

an item category title memory for storing at least one item category title for specifying a corresponding at least one data segment group as a target of a data search process;

a key data memory for storing keys for use in encryption associated with the database, wherein the keys comprise a column key corresponding to the at least one data segment group specified by the at least one stored item category title, and a plurality of different row keys corresponding respectively to the records of the database; and

an encryption unit for encrypting: (i) the data segments of said at least one specified data segment group that is the target of the data search process using the column key corresponding to the at least one specified data segment group, and (ii) data

segments of at least one data segment group corresponding to item category titles other than the stored item ~~titles~~ category title, in units corresponding to the records, using the different row keys of the respective records.

31. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 30, further comprising:

a functional unit which encrypts a received data set comprising a search process condition using the corresponding column key; and

a database search unit which performs the data search process by comparing the encrypted search process condition with the encrypted data segments of said at least one specified group.

32. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein the encryption unit sequentially generates vectors in a multidimensional space based on a set of predetermined functions, and the data segments are encrypted in accordance with an encryption method in which components of the sequentially generated vectors form a key stream of a key associated with the encryption method, and

wherein the row keys and the column key specify constants of the functions.

33. (Currently Amended) A database system comprising a first information processor terminal storing a database, and a second information processor terminal which is connected to the first information processor terminal via a network and which is adapted to send a request to the first information processor terminal for conducting a search process in the database, wherein the first information processor terminal comprises:

a functional unit which encrypts: (i) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a first kind using a same column key for said data segments forming the data segment groups and, (ii) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a second kind, in units of rows of data segments, using respective row keys, said item category titles identifying respective categories of the data segments;

wherein the second information processor terminal comprises:

a transmitting unit which transfers via the network [[,]] an encrypted data set representing conditions to be used for the search process in the first information processor terminal, when the second information processor terminal requests the first information processor terminal to perform the search process on the database, said encrypted data set being formed by encrypting an input data set specifying the conditions of the search process by using the column key; and

wherein the first information processor terminal further comprises:

a search performing unit that performs the search process on the encrypted database, based on the transmitted encrypted data set; and

a returning unit that returns an encrypted result data set resulting from the search process, to the second information processing terminal via the network.

34. (Currently Amended) A database management apparatus comprising:

a key specification memory for storing data specifying a type of encryption system to be used to encrypt data segments of each column of a database, if the column of the database is to be encrypted;

a first encryption unit that encrypts in accordance with the data stored in the key specification memory: (i) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a first kind using a same column key for said data segments forming the data segment groups, and (ii) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a second kind, in units of rows of the database, using row keys respectively specified for each of the rows, said item

category titles identifying respective categories of the data segments;

a second encryption unit that encrypts, using a basic key, all of the row keys used by the first encryption unit;

a key data generating unit that generates the column key, the row keys and the basic key; and

a storing operation unit which stores in a memory the database after encryption by the first encryption unit and the row keys after encryption by the second encryption unit, in a mutually associated manner.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the row keys are each generated based on a number of the respective rows and a random number.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein a vector generation unit sequentially generates vectors confined to a closed subspace of an n-dimensional space and defined by functions based on the keys; and

wherein a logical operation unit performs a logical operation in units of a bit involving both the data segments of the database and components of the vectors generated by the vector generation unit, to encrypt the data segments.

37. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a database system including a first terminal unit for managing the database and a second terminal unit for searching the database independently of the first terminal unit, said method comprising:

encrypting the database by encrypting, on a first terminal side of the system: (i) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a first kind using a same column key for said data segments forming the data segment groups, (ii) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a second kind, in units of rows of the database, using row keys respectively specified for each of the rows, and (iii) all of the row keys, using another key, said item category titles identifying respective categories of the data segments;

storing, at the first terminal unit side of the system, the encrypted database on portable storage medium units for distribution; and

searching the encrypted database stored on any of the distributed storage medium units, decrypting a data set obtained as a search result, and displaying the decrypted data set at a second terminal unit side of the system.

38. (Previously Presented) The database management method according to claim 37, wherein each of the storage medium units

stores both the encrypted database generated by the first terminal unit, and a predetermined application program for performing a searching process on the encrypted database.

39. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium with a program stored thereon for directing a computer to:

encrypt, in a first mode, data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a first kind using a same column key for said data segments forming the data segment groups, said data segments being elements of a database;

encrypt, in a second mode, data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a second kind using respective row keys corresponding to respective rows of the database; and

encrypting all the row keys used in the second mode using another key assigned commonly for the respective rows;

wherein the item category titles identify respective categories of the data segments.

40. (Currently Amended) A database management apparatus, comprising:

a database storage unit which stores a database comprising a plurality of records, each record including a plurality of data

segments identified by ~~respective~~ item category titles that identify respective categories of the data segments;

an item category title memory for storing at least one item category title for specifying a corresponding at least one data segment group as a target of a data search process;

a key data memory for storing keys for use in encryption associated with the database, wherein the keys comprise a column key corresponding to said at least one data segment group specified by the at least one stored item category title, and a plurality of different row keys corresponding respectively to the records of the database; and

an encryption unit for encrypting: (i) the data segments of said at least one specified data segment group that is the target of the data search process using the column key corresponding to the at least one specified data segment group, and (ii) data segments of at least one data segment group corresponding to item category titles other than the at least one stored item category title, in units corresponding to the records, using the different row keys corresponding to the respective records and another column key that is assigned commonly to the data segment groups corresponding to item category titles other than the at least one stored item category title.

41. (Currently Amended) A computer program for directing a computer to execute functions comprising:

accessing a database comprising a plurality of records, each record including a plurality of data segments identified by ~~respective~~ item category titles that identify respective categories of the data segments;

storing at least one item category title for specifying a corresponding at least one data segment group as a target of a data search process;

storing keys for use in encryption associated with the database, wherein the keys comprise a column key corresponding to said at least one data segment group specified by the at least one stored item category title, and a plurality of different row keys corresponding respectively to the records of the database; and

encrypting: (i) the data segments of said at least one specified data segment group that is the target of the data search process using the column key corresponding to the at least one specified data segment group, and (ii) data segments of at least one data segment group corresponding to item category titles other than the stored item category titles, in units corresponding to the records, using the different row keys of the respective records.

42. (Currently Amended) A computer program for directing a computer to execute functions comprising:

storing data specifying a type of encryption system to be used to encrypt data segments of each column of a database, if the column of the database is to be encrypted;

first encrypting in accordance with the data stored in the key specification memory: (i) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a first kind using a same column key for said data segments forming the data segment groups, and (ii) data segments forming data segment groups corresponding to column item category titles of a second kind, in units of rows of the database, using row keys respectively specified for each of the rows, said item category titles identifying respective categories of the data segments;

second encrypting, with a basic key, all the row keys; and

storing in a memory the database after the encryption thereof and the row keys after encryption the encryption thereof, in a mutually associated manner.